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18 APRIL 1973

## SPECIAL **PROJECT REPORT**

SENIUR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW SERIES WITH GENERAL EDMUND C. R. LASHER

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COLONEL DUNALD R. LASHER SIGUAL CORPS



US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

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SUMMARY OF

AN ORAL HISTORY

ABOUT AND OF

EDMUND CHAUNCEY ROCKEFELLER LASHER

MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED)

US ARMY

As Interviewed and Edited by

Donald R. Lasher Colonel, US Army 18 April 1973

### PROLOGUE

This is the first senior officer oral history conducted by a father-son combination. It is also the first US Army Military History Research Collection (USAMHRC) sponsored and US Army War College approved oral history of a Major General of the line--all previous ones being three or more stars in rank.

It came about almost by accident. I was immediately intrigued by the Oral History Program as an option under the USAWC Student Research Program requirement. However, since there seemed to be at least two interested students for every officer on the roster of oral histories proposed for the school year of 1972-73, the chances appeared somewhat slim that I would become a part of the program. It was only at this realization that I thought of the possibility of conducting an oral history on my father. The idea was almost immediately discarded as not sellable. Later, however, I did ask if there were any plans to expand the program to include some one, two, and three star generals. The answer was affirmative, but current funding precluded such expansion at that time. I then asked if the USAMHRC would give consideration to doing my father if I could do so without incurring additional expenses to the government for travel or related costs. After some consideration and a personal visit between General Lasher and Colonel George S. Pappas, the Director of the USAMHRC, the proposal was approved, subject to the availability of equipment and transcribers.

As of this writing, there have been five interview sessions resulting in five tapes totaling about 13 1/2 hours of conversation.

These interviews took place at West Point, New York; Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; and Chicago, Illinois.

The methodology used was as follows:

- 1. After researching General Lasher's life and career and soliciting his own chronological list of important dates and events, a proposed interview schedule and chronological agenda of topics was sent to the general (see Inclosure 1).
- 2. From this agenda, both the interviewer and interviewee made notes for use in the recording sessions.
- 3. Preparatory discussions were held before each recording session. However, these were consciously held to a minimum in order to maintain as much realism and naturalness as possible in the recorded portions.

In addition to the interviews, a few of General Lasher's contemporaries have been contacted to comment on him in any way they felt appropriate. These replies will become a part of the oral history files. An example of one of the replies from General I. Sewell Morris (Ret) is attached as Inclosure 2.

The job is not completed as of this writing, however. The personal interviews are nearly completed, but the tapes have not yet been transcribed (except for the first one) or edited for final typing. I have agreed to follow on during my next assignment in order to complete the project. Therefore, it should be noted that this summary is being drawn in the main from rough notational tape indexes (as shown at Inclosure 3) and the interviewer's memory.

This project has been a unique, interesting, and rewarding experience for both the interviewee and the interviewer; and I take this opportunity

to express the gratitude of both to all those who made it possible, especially Colonel George S. Pappas, Major James J. Steinbach, Chief, Oral History Section, USAMHRC, and Colonel Frank P. Ringenbach, Coordinator of the Student Research Program.

### THE EARLY YEARS

On 26 September 1906, the first and only son was born to

Lorinda Rockefeller and Henry Edward Lasher. This child, named

Edmund Chauncey Rockefeller Lasher, stemmed from hardy Dutch, French,
and German stock whose heritage in America traced five generations on

Lorinda's side and eight on Henry's--most of which represented medium to
well to do landowners and farmers of the mid-Hudson River Valley. The
particular bit of property that was the Lasher farm on which Edmund was
born was part of a royal grant from Queen Anne to Edmund's forefathers
in the early part of the 18th century. It is now a part of a small
farming community called Germantown in the county of Columbia, New York;
and though he spent much of his youth in other up-state New York towns,
Edmund and his family always thought of Germantown as "home." They
returned there each summer for many years until they finally moved back
for good in the early 1930's.

Edmund's boyhood, though highlighted by his annual visits "home," was often lonely. Playmates in Germantown were few and far between. Thus, he spent much of his time reading, and for excitement, he would make the rounds with one of two uncles--one a digger of water wells, the other the owner of the local telephone company. At other times, he would marvel at the all-important boat and rail traffic which made its way up and down the Hudson.

His later appreciation of the value and overall importance of transportation to the Nation and the military must have been born of these inauspicious beginnings. It was also during these years that he first became exposed to West Point and to the importance in American history of the Hudson River Valley. He and his mother and sister made occasional trips up and down the river visiting many historic spots of the Revolutionary War. As he says, "It was there that it happened"—much of history was made there, and he was fascinated by it. He still is, only more so!

His desire for a West Point education is not, therefore, at all surprising, though he says it was his mother (probably due to her attendance at Vassar College) who was the instigator and continued supporter for his entrance to the Military Academy. Nevertheless, due to deficiencies in his public schooling, it took three tries in as many years for Edmund to make his way there. But make it he did, and on 1 July 1925, he became "new cadet" Lasher.

When asked if there was any particular military family history which might have influenced him to seek a military career, General Lasher said no but did allow as how an ancestor of his, Colonel John Lasher, had served as an officer on George Washington's staff in the Revolutionary War.

At West Point, Cadet Lasher hardly distinguished himself, except that he was one of a mere few to graduate as a private (cadet rank), having run afoul of the tactical department in his senior year (and other years too, if the following caption from the 1929 Howitzer is any indication:

Ed usually may be found doing what the well dominated Cadet dares not do. He honors regulations more in the breach than in the observance. However, do not gain the impression that this trait originates from some inherent evil tendency. It is rather the expression of a personality which is forever daring to do the unusual. His is by no means a forced indifference to existing conditions of law and order. We believe that this extremely likeable friend is merely supersaturated with a desire to be in or near trouble. He likes to play with fire, so he drags invariably when possible, but after all, due to certain things such as 'cons,' these times are not so numerous as he might hope.

Despite this, he was for a while a member of the color guard and eventually graduated in the middle of his class.

One interesting anecdote told by General Lasher regarding his

West Point days concerns the day he and a fellow cadet decided to

walk across the frozen Hudson River to Bannermans Island for a "look see."

Unfortunately, soon after they obtained their objective, the icebreaker

came through leaving them no way home except via the Peekskill Ferry—

a 20 mile walk back! Incidents of this nature couldn't have helped

his standing with the powers that were.

Nevertheless, it was obvious that General Lasher regarded his West
Point training and in particular the endemic moral, human, and social
values imparted to its graduates as being the biggest and most pervasive
factor in his later life and notable success during two distinguished
careers.

So much for his boyhood and college days.

### THE 1930's

Upon graduation, General Lasher was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps; and, after what must have been a wild graduation leave, reported to his first station at Plattsburg Barracks, New York. Here his first commanding officer was so "spit and polish" that he even had the local cleaners bleach and dye the regimental mules to make them all the same color. (Unfortunately, as their hair grew out they became very mottled and messy looking). As the post quartermaster, Lieutenant Lasher also found himself involved in assisting the local gentry of Plattsburg in a small bootleg operation. He was a key link in the chain between Canada and the Fleishman's yeast plant in Syracuse, New York. Apparently, Plattsburg was where raw alcohol was exchanged for commercial consumer grade whiskies, and Lieutenant Lasher's role was to have samples of the raw alcohol analyzed at the post hospital before the trade was made. The pay was nil, but we are led to believe the liquid gratuities were of high quality.

In 1930 he was ordered to Chicago, Illinois, to the US Army Quartermaster Subsistence School and from there, in 1931, to Fort Armstrong, Hawaii, where his main duty was as Warehouse Officer of the QM Depot. The most notable event of this period (1931-1934) was his engagement and marriage to Alice H. Bernheim, whose father was one of the first dentists to become a regular Army officer and was also one of the first to head the US Army Dental Corps as The Dental Surgeon.

In 1934, shortly after their marriage, the Lashers were ordered to Fort Ontario, New York. Here he served as the Assistant Post

Quartermaster and became greatly involved in support for the Civilian Conservation Corps. It was here also that despite a considerable discrepancy in rank and age, the Lashers met and became close social friends of Brigadier General and Mrs. Walter C. Short—he was later to become one of the two senior military commanders in Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack on 7 December 1941. General Lasher has always believed strongly that General Short was undeservedly made one of the scapegoats of the incident to protect the reputation of President Roosevelt. As he says, "The President couldn't be blamed."

While at Fort Ontario he was finally promoted to First Lieutenant after six years as a Second Lieutenant. Not long after this he was invited to become the first officer to begin a new program of training with industry, in the field of transportation. This was to include tours of duty at a major port, a major depot, a major railway center (with industry) and the Office of the QM General. In this connection Lieutenant Lasher was ordered to the Washington Quartermaster Depot in the summer of 1937. However, this duty assignment was preempted by General Jordan, then the Assistant Quartermaster General for Transportation, who ordered Lieutenant Lasher into the OOMG as a special assistant working particularly on war plans, in conjunction with the Planning Division of OQMG. We can only speculate that this was keyed to a growing awareness of the European situation and the inevitability of future US involvement. It was during this duty that he became privy to the full extent of the defects and problems of transportation during World War I--knowledge which was to be of extreme importance a few years later. However, after only a few months in this assignment, Lieutenant Lasher was sent to Chicago to begin his transportation training with a one-year tour with industry. Before leaving he spent a few more weeks on TDY as the transportation officer for the 75th Anniversary and Reunion of the Battle of Gettysburg. He then proceeded to Chicago in the fall of 1938 where he worked with an organization called the Interterritorial Transportation Committee.

The committee, composed of representatives from all the nation's railroads, was chaired by a Mr. Hugh W. Siddall ("a doer in every sense of the word"). In addition to being an enlightening year, it turned out to be of untold value to General Lasher later on during World War II because of the many friendships and acquaintances he had made with civilian railroaders serving on the committee. To a great extent these became the foundation of a personal military-civilian rapport never before (or again) equalled in the industry.

Unfortunately, this tour was interrupted by the death of
Lieutenant Lasher's father in October of 1938; and because his mother
was also quite ill at the time, he was away for over a month. At the
end of his tour with industry, Lieutenant Lasher, with nothing but
verbal orders, proceeded to San Francisco to pick up his family
(including a third son born that year). They had spent the year with
grandfather Bernheim, and now all went by slow boat through the
Panama Canal and on to New York, where Lieutenant Lasher began 6 months
of duty at the Brooklyn Army Base. Because of the delay in orders and
the intransigence of the bureaucracy, the Lashers never received a
cent for their travel from Chicago (or San Francisco).

### WORLD WAR II

From this training in port operations Lieutenant Lasher went back to Washington and the OQMG, reporting for duty in late 1939. was made Chief of the Commercial Traffic Branch of the Transportation Division, OQMG. It was at this time, according to his recollection, that, as he looked back over his training and reviewed the railroad snafu of World War I, he began to realize the all important aspect of logistics to military campaigns. With the implementation of Lend Lease, and the increasing evidence that America could soon become involved in another war, planning began in earnest to prevent a recurrence of World War I problems--problems such as freight cars backed up from New York City all the way to Cincinnati, Ohio with little knowledge of their contents. They became expensive warehouses and resulted in unbelievable bottleneck, as well as a shortage of railroad cars. the Army bore the lion's share of blame for this situation. Determined to avoid any such happenings again, recently promoted Captain Lasher, in cooperation with the Association of American Railroads (especially a Mr. Aalph Budd--President of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, who was on assignment as a special advisor to President Roosevelt), formulated a concept of traffic control to include a formal agreement between the Government and the AAR. The essence of this plan was centered on two basic elements -- a traffic control system to be run by a special office of the AAR working directly with the Traffic Control Branch of the Transportation Service and also a series of holding and reconsignment points outside the immediate port areas.

Additionally, all effort was made to refrain from shipping goods to the port until there was assurance of ship tonnage available to accommodate it. The holding and reconsignment points were then used to hold back trains and cargo if unforeseen events (such as losses to submarines) created a shortage of shipping. This system worked so well that there was virtually no congestion in the ports throughout the war.

While General Lasher generously gives the Association of American Railroads credit for their cooperation in instituting the system, those who know and were on his staff affirm that he was the one man most responsible for selling the plan to both the military and transportation industry as a whole. That it worked so well is a principal reason it has never received due recognition.

Captain Lasher became Major Lasher in November of 1941. Six weeks later, just after Pearl Harbor, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He subsequently helped in the formation of the Transportation Service (later the Transportation Corps), which was made up of elements of the Quartermaster Corps and the Corps of Engineers. Six months later, still in Washington, DC, he was promoted to Colonel and obtained a new civilian assistant by the name of Williamson. Mr. Williamson had previously been the traffic manager of the Sears, Roebuck Corporation. He turned out to be of little help but received high marks as an erstwhile politician. As evidence of this, he was soon commissioned as a Colonel and brought on active duty. However, since he was still junior to Colonel Lasher this suited him not at all; so soon he was made a Brigadier General and placed over Colonel Lasher. Since

Colonel Lasher, in agreement with industry concensus, considered "Mr. Williamson" at best a consumate ass, this was a serious blow to his morale. About this time the senior transportation officers' job for the China, India, Burma theater (CBI) came open and, for what he says was the first time in his life, Colonel Lasher "volunteered." He was, however, turned down with the later explanation given by the Chief of Transportation Service that he (General Gross) had to have someone around that he could trust!

One of the more interesting aspects of Colonel Lasher's duties in World War II involved his participation in the determination and selection of sites for new camps, depots and ammunition storage and loading points, particularly with the regard to the availability of transportation. One instance he remembered well concerned a camp to be placed in the midwest. After considerable reconnaissance, a spot that met all the established criteria was finally selected in Iowa. However, it was suddenly changed to Missouri—due, in General Lasher's opinion, to the influence of the senior senator from Missouri, Harry S. Truman. This turned out to be Fort Leonard Wood—"one of the most inaccessable locations of World War II."

With the exception of one year which he spent in New York City,

General Lasher spent the entire of the duration of World War II in

Washington, DC. In New York (May of 1944 until about May of 1945) he

served as Zone Transportation Officer of the Second Zone, with additional

duties as Transportation Officer of the Second Service Command and

Transportation Corps Procurement Officer of the New York area. This

assignment was made solely to comply with the Manchu Law--a law passed

by Congress limiting the number of consecutive years that could be spent in duty with the headquarters of the War Department in the National Capital Region—this to prevent "homesteaders" from becoming too prevalent. After the year away, Colonel Lasher returned to Washington, DC and to the Office of the Chief of Transportation. Here he remained until summer of 1950. So, except for a one year break, General Lasher was in Washington for the period 1939 thru 1950. He repeatedly tried to get overseas but met with singular lack of success—becoming a victim of both his own expertise and the lack of in house capability in and understanding of traffic management and commercial land transportation.

### THE DEMI-DECADE

Back in the Pentagon, General Lasher (then Col) was assigned as Chief, Movements Control Division, OCT. At this time he became an instigator and staunch supporter of the movement to create a separate transportation Corps. With the establishment of the T.C., he then was instrumental in founding the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA), which is today one of the foremost professional transportation organizations. General Lasher became its second national President (though it was then known as the Army Transportation Association) and has been an active member and supporter of the association for over 27 years.

In 1947 he was selected to attend the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF); and upon graduation was assigned to the Army General Staff, where he served as Transportation advisor to the

Secretary of Defense and later as the first Executive Director of the Joint Military Transportation Committee, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The major problems of this job revolved mainly around the difficulty in obtaining "unanimous" decisions, (which were required in those days). In particular the Air Force seemed to be hardest to separate from its parochial attitude.

#### KOREA-

Here again, to his benefit, Colonel Lasher found himself involved in contingency planning for a situation in which he later became deeply involved—Korea. In August of 1950, he was ordered to the Far East Command as Transportation Officer of the Eighth US Army, serving under Generals Walker, Ridgway, and Van Fleet. Going through Tokyo he remembers the greeting he received by General MacArthur. He made Colonel Lasher "feel as though he had been waiting to meet you for years."

As General Lasher (then still COL) arrived in Korea the situation was rapidly going from bad to worse, as the 8th Army was pushed farther and farther back into the Pusan Perimeter. Supplies were low, resupply was practically non-existent, morale was very low, and personnel replacements were nil. Shortly after his arrival he attended a special conference in which General Walker asked his three Corps Commanders for their recommendations. All three recommended that they defend while preparing for eventual evacuation of the penninsula. The next morning, however, orders came out to attack northward out of the perimeter; which they did with spectacular results—stopping only to

allow the Inchon Landing to take place. In General Lasher's opinion that landing was unnecessary and received far more credit than it deserved in the overall assessment of the campaign. He says many of the Eighth Army Staff were "mad as hell" over it. They were totally left out of the planning for the landing, then had to put the brakes on their own momentum for the Marines to play to the grandstand with undue drama. As for the other half of the pinchers movement—that is the amphibious assault on the East Coast at Wonsan—the ROK Capital Division was so far north by that time that it became an administrative landing of little import.

General Lasher also discusses many of the unique characteristics of the transportation problem at that time. Since the roads were extremely poor, rail and water transport became the key bulk freight means. Fortunately, the Japanese had built the rail system with military use in mind, to include dual bridge spans and double tunnel bores through the mountains.

His early perception of the need for diesel locomotives to replace the coal burning models and the innovation of using "autorail" buses for evacuation of the wounded were notable. However, his initiative in doing the "impossible" in support of the Wonsan landing, which his boss (the G-4) had said couldn't be done, was one of the main reasons he received a strong personal recommendation for promotion from General Ridgeway directly to General Collins, the Army Chief of Staff . (See Inclosure 4.)

General Lasher also discusses the seriousness of the lack of flank coordination between the Eighth Army and 10th Corps, which he attributes partially to General MacArthur, who was dealing directly with both commanders from Tokyo, and partially to each of the respective commanders for not insuring flank coordination.

### FORT EUSTIS

From Korea General Lasher went to Fort Eustis, Va., where he became Commandant of the Transportation School. He describes this period as one of his most rewarding experiences as a career officer. He found himself in what he considers a key position of the Transportation Corps during a critical period of growth and maturation toward its proper place along with the other branches of the Army. This was particularly true for the officer corps, and General Lasher is due considerable credit for his efforts at attaining the highest quality officers for the school staff and faculty in order to insure a corresponding quality of outstanding graduates. Under his command a new T.C. School was built. Among other things it pioneered the use of closed circuit TV for education. Also, many of the tools and techniques of transportation, such as helicopter employment and support doctrine and the Delong Pier, which later on played such key roles in the Vietnam War, were developed at Fort Eustis during his tenure there. General Lasher is particularly proud of his accomplishments as commandant of the Transportation School. His tour at Fort Eustis, incidentally, was the only time in his entire career that his family lived in government quarters--3 years out of 28 1/2!

### FULL CIRCLE

From Fort Eustis General Lasher went back to the Pentagon as the Assistant Chief of Transportation (Traffic) and in October 1954 received his first star after 12 1/2 years as a Colonel. He became a deputy to Major General Paul F. Yount with essentially the same

duties he performed prior to and during WW II. Soon, however, he was given the job of implementing one of the first examples of the single manager principle. He was tasked with conceptualizing, organizing, staffing and then operating the Military Traffic Management Agency.

In so doing he carried out the Secretary of the Army's responsibilities as the Single Manager and Executive Agent for all Department of Defense activities in the area of transportation traffic management. This agency pulled together the traffic management resources of all services but was considerably smaller than the sum of the individual parts. One of the more important precepts of this organization was the maximum use of civilian transportation systems as opposed to military. This was done to keep the civilian system healthy and viable. Today this agency is called the MTMTS. (Military Traffic Management and Terminal Service)

Not long after this General Lasher received his second star (November 1956) and he again pioneered in applying new technology to the solution of longstanding problems. In this case it was in the use of computers and the application of automatic data processing tools to traffic management. This is a good example of General Lasher's visionary abilities, since the field of ADP was in its infancy in 1957. Yet he recognized the great potential of the computer toward helping solve many current problems. He envisioned someday even replacing the "Rate men" who were so key to the MTMA operation, yet were the limiting element in timeliness of response.

That summer, in July of 1957, his youngest son Julian died at the age of 18 after almost ten years of suffering from chronic

ulcerative colitis. This, of course, had a profound and lasting affect on the Lasher family. It was shortly after this that General Lasher began to think of retiring -- a notion brought on in part by his son's death. In March of 1957, General Lasher gave a speech before the Federation For Railway Progress--the most prestigeous railroad organization in the country--at their annual meeting. Being an important occasion and one in which he intended to take the railroads to task for certain aspects of their management and service to the military, he personally wrote and memorized every word of the speech. For example, he questioned the reasons for such a critical and highly monitored shipment as liquid oxygen (LOX) taking 7 to 9 days in high priority shipment from Gary, Indiana to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. The meeting was held in the Wardman. Park Hotel, Washington, DC, in the largest ballroom in the city. It was a capacity crowd, including a fair amount of well known and influential people in both the railroad industry and the government. The speech was provocative enough to cause the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and two or three other presidents or vice presidents to walk out before it was over. The overall reaction was somewhat electric and General Lasher's closest advisors felt he might have sealed his own doom. Much to the contrary, however, he received five job offers in the next several weeks, four of which were from some of these same men. Among those jobs he was offered was one as Vice President for Public Relations of the AAR from Mr. Bill Faricy, President of the AAR, who had tried to get the general to tone down his speech before he gave it. Others included

offers as Vice President of the New York Central Railroad, President of the New Haven Railroad and President of the North American Car Corporation (NAC) in Chicago, Illinois.

This latter offer came as a result of some "head hunting" done by the placement firm of Handy Associates. They had been retained by NAC to attempt to find a replacement for the current President who was close to the manadatory retirement age. Handy Associate's selection of General Lasher was purely coincidential with the other offers.

### A SECOND CAREER

And so, after 28 1/2 years came his retirement from the Army and beginning of a highly successful second career in mufti. He became President and within one year also the chief executive officer of NAC. By prior agreement there was to be no one formally designated as Chairman of the Board of Directors for a few years, though General Lasher acted as the chairman at the meetings. It was planned that as General Lasher approached mandatory retirement at age 65 he would formally move up to the vacant Chairmanship as a replacement for president was designated.

North American Car Corporation and its stockholders prospered greatly during General Lasher's thirteen year tenure. Previously an overly conservative monetary policy had stifled growth and restricted the business to the original one of owning and leasing railroad freight cars. However, in a very few years under his leadership, the company not only diversified its operation through the

acquisition of subsidiary companies, but also more than doubled in size; and stockholders now had four times the shares they had at the beginning—each share worth more than the original price at the time General Lasher came on the scene. During this period NAC was listed on the New York Stock Exchange, reincorporated in the state of Deleware, and saw its common stock rating suddenly go from NR (no ranking) to the highest ranking of A+ as published by Standard and Poor's Corporation—a rating which never changed thereafter.

Nevertheless, General Lasher found that though his military experience had left him excellently prepared for management and leadership of a civilian corporation, it had also left him with a distinct lack of depth in the financial intricacies inherent in such enterprises. It is, therefore, even more to his credit that he rapidly mastered them to the point where Forbes Magazine respectfully dubbed him the "money strategist."

Always an innovator, he made the NAC the first in the industry to introduce rail cars for the transport of automobiles and also the first to introduce fiberglass tank cars. During these years there were also a series of merger possibilities, each rejected for one reason or another. One of the companies with which a merger had been discussed was the Flying Tiger Corporation; and though North American rejected the prospect, it is apparent that Flying Tiger did not. For approximately a decade later, Flying Tiger quietly borrowed enough money to buy, in a single transaction, 500,000 shares of common stock of NAC to represent some 17-20 percent of the outstanding stock. This,

In combination with a subsequent tender offer, rapidly saw Flying
Tiger acquire somewhere near 45% of the stock. And though it came
from short term loans and somewhat questionable practices, it amounted
to virtual control of NAC. General Lasher and his advisors fought to
stave off the take-over but lacked the support of the Civil Aeronautics
Board, without which they had little hope of success. So, a few
months later NAC stopped resisting and became a subsidiary of the
Flying Tiger Corporation. For Flying Tiger this was a true shot in
the arm for an otherwise shaky outlook, and their stock and fortunes
seem to have greatly prospered since then.

General Lasher retired shortly afterward, but not until the manadatory date at age 65. He has remained in Chicago -- still at 1420 Lake Shore Drive. However, he and Mrs. Lasher have recently purchased a home in Cold Spring, New York, not far from the Hudson River and only a few miles from West Point across the river. for some years been a member of the board of trustees of the USMA Association of Graduates and will continue to keep active in this In addition, he has a series of avocations, most of which endeavor. he began either during the years with NAC or since his second retirement. These include cartography and collecting and restoring old maps and first editions of the colonial and Revolutionary War period. He also has a fine collection of Georgian silver antique silver salt cellars. crystal decanters and old silhouettes. These are, in addition to a respectable stamp and coin collection. With these interests, the refurbishing he plans on the Cold Spring home, plus updating the Lasher Geneology, he plans to keep quite busy. When these are done

he may take on a project of establishing a historical library near his boyhood home--a fancy he has carried for years.

On the tapes General Lasher does give opinions and comments on a variety of subjects such as:

The Voluntary Army and Universal Military Training.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Concept of the Defense Department.

Civic Action and the Military.

Federal Regulation of Public Services.

Entrepreneurships and Economic Growth versus Socialization.

The role of Civilians in the Military Structure.

Specialization vs Generalization in and out of the Service.

Why an Army?

West Point from numerous aspects.

The need for an ROTC and the National Guard.

The Generation Gap.

The importance of "character" to success.

### PROPOSED SCHEDULE PLAN FOR ORAL HISTORY OF MAJOR GENERAL (RET.) EDMUND C.R. LASHER

<u>Present - 26 October 1972</u> - Individual Research (Write letters to other General officers who knew General Lasher).

26 - 27 October 1972 - Meet with General Lasher at West Point, New York.

- Present and discuss proposed plan change as desired by General Lasher.
- 2. Conduct First Interview (see attached chronology and major subject areas).

30 Nov - 3 December - Meet at Carlisle Barracks for 2d Interview - shoot for completion of military career or through Korean War at worst.

2d or 3d Week in January 1973 - Meet in Chicago, Friday - Sunday for wrap-up interview covering General Officer duties and observations and civilian career highlights and observations.

Mid-February 1973 - Additional meeting if necessary - Chicago, Illinois. Editing will be dependent on timeliness of transcription but should be done before April, if possible.

### PROPOSED CHRONOLOGY AND AGENDA OF TOPICS

### I. Family Background and Early Years.

- A. Geneological highlights.
- B. Mother's social and educational background. Father's social and educational and business background.
  - C. Sister?
  - D. Religious factors.
- E. Other environmental factors or influences such as the family social and economic status.
- F. Where born and educated type of curriculum and educational environment later influences.
- G. Type and size of birthplace and residence during youth (Germantown and Albion).
  - H. Hobbies, sports or other extra-curricular interests.
- I. Important events during youth having later influence or effect.
  (military influence?)
  - J. Why West Point? Particularly after initial problems.
  - K. Entrance into W.P.

### II. West Point Years - Highlights

- A. Activities (extra-curricular)
- B. Problems

Academic

Other

- c. First Class
  c. Graduation rank, why?
- D. Why the QM Corps?
- E. Famous classmates (roommates) and comment as appropriate. Note for later also.

F. Anecdotes and other items of interest, including family relations during cadet years.

### III. Early military career.

- A. What is/was Plattsburg Barracks? Assignment by choice?
- B. 1931-34 Fort Armstrong T.H. Marriage. Highlights.
- C. Fort Ontario, 1934-37 Highlights.
- D. Military and civilian acquaintances and their affect on career.

  (Wilson, Marshall's son-in-law -- other contemporaries as well as seniors).
  - E. 1937-38, Trans Div of OQMG, Washington, D.C.
    - 1. Highlights People.
- 2. State of general awareness of the impending World War (or War in Europe) and what opinions, plans, frustrations and actions were connected with this perception, if any?
- 3. Life in the Nation's Capital what it was like for military in general, and young in particular. Economic and social status.
- F. General recollections and feelings regarding the status of the Army (and military in general) and the public attitude toward the military?

  Officers? Also an assessment of the overall quality of the officer and enlisted corps during the early 1930's vs. late 1930's vs. early 1940's.

  What lessons can we learn from this which might be applicable to today's impending volunteer Army? (Cover thoughts on Volunteer Army here or later on as desired).
  - G. Congressional influences and guidance pre-World War I vs. post-1950?
  - H. Training with industry comments.
    - 1. Hugh W. Siddall opinions and influences.
    - 2. Family separation 3d son.

- I. Brooklyn 1939 why and why so short?
- IV. The War Years.
  - A. 1940-1942 OQMG Asst. to Ch., Trans. Div.
- 1. Major problems, new policies and concepts involved in the logistics of rapid mobilization and overseas deployment and supply, particularly as affects Commercial Traffic Branch.
  - 2. Personalities involved.
  - B. 1942-1944 Deputy Chief Traffic Control Division OC Transp.
- 1. Recollections on unique problems and solutions to highly complex personnel traffic problems dealings with industry, rapid expansion of military capability (management of transportation as well as operation), from almost zero.
  - 2. Concept of building industry rather than military in CONUS.
  - 3. Overseas deployment of the operation of rail and trade transportation.
  - 4. Personal aspects.

- C. 1945-1946, Commander of 2d Transp Zone, N.Y. City and T.O.2d Corps Area (Governors Island, Ft. Jay)
  - 1. Duties scope problems people.
  - 2. Life style Ridgewood, New Jersey.
- 3. Problems associated with retrograde of people and supplies at end of war in Europe.

- D. 1946-47, OC Transp. Washington, D.C.
  - NDTA role in creating and fostering as most presigious of its kind.
  - National President NDTA 1st National Convention.
     Highlights

### V. 1947-1951 - Aftermath and Korea.

- A. 1947-48 ICAF Student and Transp. Advisor to SECDEF.
  - Unusual sounds like a first why?
  - 2. Scope of Job Personal observations of Forrestal.
- B. 1948-1950 First Executive Director of Joint Military Transportation Committee, JCS.

Problems with new concept and new organization.

People and politics.

- C. 1950-1954 Korea
  - 1. T.O. EUSA under Generals Walker, Ridgway.
- 2. State of rail and road nets as fight back up peninsula from Pusan Perimeter and how repaired.
  - 3. Inchon

- 4. Chinese entry and see-saw up and down the peninsula.
- 5. Ridgway's personal letter to General Collins regarding promotion to Brigadier General.
- 6. Personal observations on these commanders and the Truman/MacArthur incident.
  - 7. Personal problems of separation, as appropriate.
  - 8. Awards and decorations.

### VI. 1951-1958 - The Coming of Age of the U.S. Army Transportation Corps.

- A. 1951-1954 Commandant of the Transportation School, Ft. Eustis, Va.
  - 1. Innovations.
  - 2. Problems, particularly as regards senior officers and policy.
  - 3. Comment on 1st on-post life in over 20 years commissioned service.
  - 4. Hurow, et. al.
- B. 1954 Back to Washington, D.C.
  - 1. Asst Ch., Transportation.
- 2. First Commander of Military Traffic Management Agency Early implementation of the single manager concept.
  - 3. Growing pains pioneering in use of computers for MIS.
  - 4. Difference, if any, from MTMTS of today.
  - C. Retirement.
    - 1. Why early?
    - 2. Probability of 3d star (first in history) vs. rational for 3d career.
    - 3. Why NACC and how as opposed to others.
- 4. Comment on "global 'ward heeling' assignments in exotic foreign ports." in peacetime, top heavy Army.
- 5. Give-em hell speech to annual meeting of Federation for Railway Progress.

- VII. The 2d Career.
- 1958 1. President and Ch Exec. Off and Director of NACC.
- -1970 2. "The money strategist" Forbes.
  - 3. Highlights and Milestones of civilian career, particularly the impressive growth and diversification of the company.
    - 4. Innovations in Rail Car leasing Specialty cars - "piggy back" Competition

1970-71

Chairman of Board, NACC

20 September, 1971 - Second Retirement.

1971 - 72 - Special interests and plans.

### VIII. Concepts, Motivations and Philosophy.

- A. Comments on future need for military academies (West Point).
  - 1. Should be a change? If so, what and how?
- 2. What about possibility of using ROTC and OCS for source of officers? much cheaper.
  - 3. Turn academies into graduate school? (British for example)
  - 4. If not what are overriding reasons for continued existence.
- B. How much did feel lack of overseas duty during World War II hurt career and why?
  - C. Comments on patronage.
    - Personal situation.
    - 2. General importance and criteria.
- D. Senior officers known personally. General Bradley, Marshall, Walker, Ridgway, VanFleet, Besson, etc., etc., Eisenhower.

- E. What civilian or military publications subscribed to and found most useful? Why?
  - F. Defense Department structure and viability of JCS.
  - G. Career Motivation.
    - 1. Patriotism.
    - 2. Professionalism.
    - 3. Personal values.
- H. Life style objectives realities restrictions and rewards at various ranks (then and now).
  - I. Career patterns and career "management."
  - J. Specialization value and need then and now.
  - K. Volunteer Army.
  - L. Total vs. Limited War.
  - M. Government Civilians in the Army.
  - N. Affiliations with clubs and organizations (NDTA, et al.)
- O. Value of esprit and motivation and relation to leadership.

  (in and out of service).
  - P. How well Army officer prepared for business world.
  - Q. Army role in society today.

History and tradition

US Budget realities and public sentiment

(Why an Army?)

R. Future transportation concepts.

# ASSOCIATION OF AND ENGLISHED AND ENGLISHED AND ENGLISHED AND SHIPLE WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

I. SEWELL MORRIS

Yice President

Assistant to President

January 30, 1973

Major James J. Steinback Chief, Oral History US Army Military History Research Collection Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

Dear Major Steinback:

I first met General Lasher in 1941, shortly after Pearl Harbor. At that time he was a young officer in charge of the commercial traffic element of the Quartermaster Corps, an office responsible for the commercial transport of cargo and personnel within the continental United States. At that first meeting he impressed me as a man of great confidence and composure despite the exploding demands of the Army for commercial transportation suddenly imposed upon him. That initial impression was justified. Throughout that war era. General Lasher exhibited the greatest ability and perception in the face of countless, ever-mounting pressures. History records that the greatest volume of military goods and troops ever were successfully transported by our commercial carriers, without any rationing machinery per'se; a feat due in no small measure to the leadership and skill of General Lasher. The commercial transportation industry had confidence in him - they trusted him - they responded to the challenge and they failed us not.

In the ensuing years General Lasher served the Army in a variety of important transportation assignments, ranging from duty on the senior transportation staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; transportation officer of the Eighth U. S. Army in Korea during that conflict; to the position of Commander, Military Traffic Management Agency, the first joint agency serving as traffic manager for all military services for commercial transportation within the United States. In all of these assignements, and others, he exhibited a breadth of understanding of transportation, and how it could best serve our nation, far beyond anyone else I have ever known.

Upon his retirement from active service he assumed the leadership of a commercial company engaged in the lease of certain types of rail freight cars. His record of accomplishment in that period of his life is no less than spectacular. The company was aroused from its status of relative inactivity into a dynamic, progressive, forward-thinking corporation. It expanded its horizons. It entered new fields. It grew. It became a vital force in the transportation leasing business. It prospered. General Lasher was recognized as a business leader of extraordinary versatility.

To assess his contributions to the military services and to the transportation industry as a whole is really not possible, in my opinion. So many of his contributions were intangible. He stood out above the crowd as a leader. Thus people around him worked harder and performed better. He was compassionate and understanding of others who might have otherwise faltered. He believed in giving a subordinate the opportunity to prove himself. In my case, I know, there was no hesitancy on my part to make decisions in the manner I thought best. I had every confidence that he would back me up just as long as I did what I thought was best. He had the vision to look ahead - to sift out the minutiae from the truly important issues. He was-the most non-parochial transportation man I ever met. No mode owned him.

There is a recurring story recorded in Reader's Digest about the "Most Unforgetable Character I've Ever Met". Certainly General Lasher is the most unforgetable man I have ever met in the transportation world. Forceful yet considerate; articulate yet non-abrasive; visionary yet understanding of the frailties of others; these are but a few of the many qualities of the man. He thrived on pressure. I never saw him rattled. The tougher the going, the calmer he became.

My life was enriched by my good fortune in knowing him and for the opportunity to work with him. He taught me much. I learned from just being around him. But with it all, the greatest gift he gave me was his friendship. For that I shall forever be grateful.

Sincerely, Hewey Morris

### ORAL HISTORY LOG M.G Lather - Tape 1 Side 1

Item 2 (Conti	nued)
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Toom 2 (Conclinac	
10-52	Ancestry, birth, birthplace basic facts and background Germantown, NY.
53-58	Icehouse and Ice business along Hudson river.
78~85	Father's trip to Ireland to buy potatos due to potato shortage in US.
86-105	Reminisicences of results of father's trip and souvenirs brought home.
106-120	Geneology and relations.
121-153	Move to Rochester, NYGrandfather diedkindergarten
154-162	Home in Rochester
163-200	Move to Albion NYtype of town and citizenry: Polish maid Sophie: 2 1/2 East Academy St.
200-243	Economic and Social status during youth in Albion: mother active socially and in church. Change of oil lamps to gas to electric lights.
244-288	Automobiles vs horses in youthcarbon arc street lamps. Learn to ride bikenearness of Eire Canal.
289-333	Grade SchoolMiss Sanford. Harrassment of biology teacher. Carl Carmerhistorian, interest in Hudson Valley (lives below Lindhurst near Tarrytown)fighting the CONED nuclear powered generating plant at Storm King Mountain.
334–385	Mrs. Reynolds3rd grade teachermove in 1917 to larger houseasperagus beds and sweet peas.
387-488	First automobilesJackson, Cole, Case. Annual summer trips to Germantown from Albion, "Going Home"300 miles, dawn to dark trip.
489-562	Reflections of summers in Germantown as a young boyStanley Lasher and telephone company: Kenneth White and Walter Miller Historian of Columbia county.
563-652	Summer excursions, picnics; social life of the summer. Broad Rockefeller. Back to Albionties of town wealth to Eastman Kodak.

653-700	Fathers salary—-WWI little recollection. Desire to go in the Navy (too young); little real effect on family or life style. Father member of the home guard.
701-774	Breeding Irish Setterstrapping skunks and other animals- muskrats.
775-848	Boy ScoutsTanawanda Indianspersonal opinions of Indian race.
849-081	Reflections on Hudson river transportation particularly river boats and evolution from boat to train. Day liners and night boats; Washington Irving (Boat)
082-233	Judson Mack, Stanley Laudauer, Nick Passerell, highschool-football. Didn't care too much for sports.
	Professor Carmer, Carey Pratt8th grade teacher.  Mother on board of education (first woman elected to office in state of NY). Finished high school early3 yrs.
238-393	Reflections on family discipline and familial relations—religion as major influence; chasing fire and getting bawled out. "No generation gap". Belief in and trust of parents—strict discipline.
2nd side 010-093	More on teachers as influence during youth. Failed first West Point entrance examination.
	Hawk Andrewsenglish teacher and drama director.
	French instructorphonetics, attractive.
Senior Yr	Winning prize for essay on Prohibition.  Signer prizeoratory.
H.S. (	Signer prizeoratory.
	Won prize for speech on John Brown.
094–138	CMTCCitizens Military Training CorpsPlattsburg Barrackssummer training
	Saltpeter.
149-207	Why West Point?
	Mother's influenceVassar
	L.E. Small
* ***	High prestige of military at the time.

Seemed logical thing to do.

208-290	How entered W.P.
	Appointed from Wash. State.
-	Failed first examinations.
	Went to Cornell to prep. (learned to smoke)
	Failed again.
	First taste of anti-semitic prejudice.
291-346	1924Braden's National Preparatory School.
	Excellent trainingfinally passed exams.
347-356	Entrance into West Point.
357-379	Reminiscence of Cornell and dating at Elmira College.
	"Elmira Female college for women"
380-505	Ancestry
	Rockefeller and Lasher geneology.
	Col. John Lasher with George Washington.
	McLean Lasher?
	East camp (Now Germantown), surrounded by Livingston Manor (Chancelor Livingston)
507-536	Polopel Island bought by Bannerman
	Bannerman's Island Arsenal walked over on ice. Ice breaker came through.
537-579	First bridge over the riverdecline of the many ferries.
580-653	Back to discussion of parental relationship. Depression and its affect.
ļ	Pre-mention of Plattsburg Barracks and friends

Parents kept mum on their own hardship.

Stock Market Bust.

Enter West Point -- First Day.

Beast Barracks Memories.

Academic recollections.

Compare w/Cornell.

Comments of current educators -- too strict a regime .

Herb West--no patience w/West Point methods.

Modernization of curriculum.

Didn't mind--(e.g. Uniform flag).

# ORAL HISTORY LOG M. G. Lasher - Tape 2 Side 1

# Item 2 (Continued)

Counter #	Remarks
10-56	How "sidled" into West Point. Comment on 18 year old vote-against! Place of "hazing" in West Point scheme of things.
57-85	Current teenage sense of value -permissiveness - comment on resounding defeat of Senator McGovern - wisdom born of experience.
8 <b>6-132</b>	Navy game trip incident - bat board; value of your "word" being believed without equivocation - very important in life then and now.
133-154	Cpt. Clair Armstrong - spoony tactical officer - Frank Merril of Merril's Marauders.
155-260	Academics at West Point; trouble with math - good in French and graphics - Mention of roommates - W. K. Wilson (Weary) and Jim Winn. Athletics - Extra curricular activities.
	Made Sgt. First Class Year - color guard - busted and graduated as Pvt. Graduated in middle of class.  Monograph on Battle of Gettysburg.
261-278	Dedication Soldiers Field, Chicago. (Charles Gates Dawes - V.P. dedicatory speech). 1926 Army Navy game.
279-300	Why QM Corps.
301-380	Comment on Civilian Control of Military, and lack of the existence of a W.P.P.A. Graduation, Summer Leave.
381-473	Plattsburg Barracks - 1st Commanding Officer - Col John F. Madden. Bleached and dyed Mules! Plattsburg Red Light District. Social life.
474-505	Bootleg business and personal involvement in "rum running" with Plattsburg cronies.
506-533	"Learning" from Sgt. Hope about the QM Corps.

	534-606	Subsistence school in Chicago. Trip to Hawaii via Panama.
	607-766	Comments on Volunteer Army then and now. Main reservation is can we afford it? Need for Universal Military Training or equivalent.
^		Boy on deck of Chateau Thiery.
,		Comparison of scope of military responsibility to that of equivalent civilian types and respective salaries.
	767-940	Hawaii - Fort Armstrong - living on economy - Duties at QM Depot - Escort Wagon Problem.
		10% pay cut due to the Depression.
-	941-115	Dexter Lowry - meeting and marrying new bride. Helmut Johanes Piersig - roommate and best man. Okaulehau. (5.7?)
_	116-248	Major Bill Kasten - knife and ball drill. Henry Hockwald.
	249-386	Fort Ontario - Cpt. Huber and Lt. Wick (private toilet seat) Maj. Nealon and hot water in toilet. B. G. Walter C. Short- C. GAdj. Bill Collier.
Side 2	387-463	Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) - Doctors Baird and Bohannon.
Side 7	010-096	Slow promotions - Lts. with children in college - Ltc Gregory Stony Point firing range problems and tent camp, mess halls.
	097-134	Maj. Omohundro - birth of second child.
<b>u</b>	135-240	1937 invitation from OQMG for first training with industry in transportation.
•	· 	Washington QM Depot pre~empted for Office of QM General.
	•	(Bring war plans up to date).
	241-443	Transportation arrangements for 75th reunion of Battle of Gettysburg.
•	•	Fall 1938 start training with industry - Mr. Hugh Siddall.
		Death of father - October 1938.
•		Family to San Francisco and birth of third boy - Julian.
		Lack of orders to Brooklyn Army Base.
•	ert.	No money for travel!

	• •
444–479	Training in port operations.
480-532	Back to OQMG - Realization of importance of logistics- concept of logistic movement of troops in lieu of engagement - envelopment.
533-683	Chief Commerical Traffic Br-Lend Lease. WW I transportation SNAFU and lessons learned. Association of American railroads Comments of Roosevelt's perception of coming war. Comment on pre-Pearl Harbor communication by Washington ("The President couldn't be blamed").
684-855	Mr. Budd - planning with and cooperating with on genesis of transportation mobilization concept. (later pay off in selection for President of N.A.C.).
	Inception of traffic control-AAR control office with Arthur Gast - signing of General agreement.
856-999	System of frieght releases and planning for implementation of the Holding and Reconsignment Points.
	Notable success compared to WW I.
	Movements Control Division of Transportation Service.
001-180	Various moves in Washington D.C. Occupied Pentagon Office when only two sides up. Promotion from Cpt. to Maj. and to Lt. Col. Pearl Harbor Day. Promotion to Col.
181-300	Creation of transportation service from QMC & CE. Gen. Summerville - Ch Army Services. Gen. Gross - Ch Transportation Service.
301-444	Mr. then Col. then Brig. Gen. Williamson from Sears Roebuck.
	Volunteer for C.B.I. duty - turned down.
	Manchu Law - to N.Y. and return after one year.
	Williamson's conduct.

### ORAL HISTORY LOG M.G. Lasher - Tape 3

# Side 1

Item 2(Continued)	
Counter #	Remarks
10-57	Richard M. Boyd - Asst early in WW II. Problems in obtaining good people in rapid expansion of Army. "Easy to hire but not always easy to hire right guy."
58-80	Selecting sites for new camps, ammo storage and loading points, etc.
81-123	Harry S. Truman - Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Political influence. Obtaining RR service to new camps and sites.
124-177	Ammo explosion at Paula's Hook (opposite Weehawken). Building long pier to handle ammo for WW II. Labor problems in Philadelphia - move to Boston - "Out of frying pan into fire."
178-287	12 million in uniform - about 7 moves per prior to overseas. Burden on public transportation. Reasons why no government takeover of RR - no need perceived due to cooperation. Besides RR could do it better.
288-315	Example of Korean railroad practices and relief of COL who tried to impose his own American style.
316-334	Industry grew rich on the war.
335-396	How dispose of or utilize capital goods expanded for war effort. Little problem adjusting to peace - but advent of air travel era hurt RR very soon.
397-487	90% travel by auto even in 1940. RR & Air travel compared. Credit for traffic management smooth operation.
488~569	Mr. Gas and Charlie Buford - key men on rates and charges. GAO accusations and congress investigation of high prices (price fixing). Mr. Cleveland - Luncheons with him and Buford at Mayflower Hotel each week.

570-700	Oakridge, Tennessee - Site selection problem. Leslie Groves, ch of construction division of OQMG. General Gross - Ch. of Transportation General Summerville General Gregory General Williamson back to Sears, Roebuck and forced retirement.
701-758	Manhattan Project - moving atomic material - negotiating rates - liability.
759-800	Extra long flat cars for Manhattan Project. Prefab. sections for 1st shot at Los Alamos.
801-005	Career affect by lack of overseas tours - 12½ years as full colonel. General MacArthur greeting Manchu Law House in Ridgewood, N.J sold to Mr. Phillips Help of government in easing numerous moves.
006-099	Job in New York - not very challenging overall.  Hotel space management for returnees and relatives as war in Europe ended.  2nd Zone Transportation Office.
100-171	TDY to Seattle, Washington December '45 to help bring Asian Theater troops home - cold coaches from Florida.
172-227	Move back to Washington, D.C. (Housing problem - 60 days to find a house). Signing papers out of sight of other "lookers."
228-254	Sold to Navy file.
255-395	Assigned to OCT as Asst Ch of Transp for traffic - household goods problem. Ch. Transp - General Leavy
396-463	NDTA (National Defense Transportation Association) and establishment of the Transportation Corps

# Side 2

	010-060	More on NDTA - First Annual Forum - Red Skelton - Presidency
	061-128	Award for Transportation Man of the Year - JCS decided on. Presented by Vice President.
	129-170	Back to OCT duties. Leavy replaced by General Heileman 1946-47 - DOD established. Attendance at ICAF.
	171-216	Truman's Alarm for Civil Defense.  Russel Hopley - Headed Civil Defense Study - Forrestal's request for early graduation.for Colonel Lasher - Refused "Double duty" - Jack Stark
	217-221	Writing Transportation chapter of Civil Defense study.
	222-310	Viewing Nuclear Tests in Nevada - Las Vegas Book on Civil Defense not published - Hopley's death.
	311-374	Assigned as Fist Executive Director of the Joint Military Transportation Committee. (Couldn't sell General Heileman on Army Transportation corps to pick up the total procurement responsibility for all service transportation space).
	375-474	Troubles in JCS in getting "unanimous" decisions - dissident (LTC Hubbard) Air Force officer - see General Farthing (LTC then General Earl Hedland) - Parochialism of JCS.
•	475-530	Anticipation of Korean poblem - ("Abe" Lincoln drawing 38th parallel?)
	531-588	JCS planning aided in later assignment to Korea. Ordered to Korea beginning of war. Meeting General MacArthur
	589-665	PUSAN PERIMETER Condition of Railraods (obviously built for military purposes - dual bridge spans and tunnel bores).  Learned importance of water.
	666-689	Ordered Diesel Locomotives to replace original coal locomotives.

•	•	•
	690-730	General Walker Conference: Corps Commanders recommend evacuation (serious situation, low morale - slow, if any, supplies) - Next morning out came orders to Attack!
	731-779	B.G. Bill Collier helped work around the G-4. Break out and race North RR Employee Strike - petition for more pay
	•	signed in blood.
	780-829	Roving bands of bandits Using "A frame" Brigades to carry freight and supplies in mountainous regions.
	830-907	Hospital cars - beautiful! Two hospital trains-using "Autorail" on buses for wounded evacuation.
• ·	908-942	COL CARR - More harm than good - gave LOM and sent home.
	943-982	LTC McClellan - very successful replacement. Theft and Banditry.
	983-020	One big difference between Korea and Vietnam Syngman Rhee vs. Diem and ensuing instability.
	021-109	General Walker's death.  General Ridgeway - first morning briefing - other impressions.  Rill Rulleck - C 2
•		Bill Bullock - G-3. Tom Conelly - G-2.
	110-201	More on General Walker - Mrs. Walker vs. Mrs. MacArthur.
•		Similarity of mode life and of death to General Patton. (Pyongyang) Russian copy of Packard - sent to Japan.
	202-255	General Ridgeway more active (peripatetic) than Walker. Gustaffson Hq. Cmdt Art Hurow.
•	,	General Ridgeway personal recommendation for promotion to B.G.
•	256-283	General VanFleet - Riding cow catcher of Train.
	284-378	Inchon Landing - not necessary - hold-up 8th Army to accomodate it. Wonson Landing "Bob Hope on Beach"
	en e	
	F TH	43
•	<i>,</i>	

一種の大学の一般の一個などのである。

Grave error of lack of commo between corps and 8th Army
- Also running war from Tokyo, without proper coordination.

# ORAL HISTORY LOG M. G. LASHER - TAPE 4

# Side 1

# Item 2 (Continued)

Counter #	Remarks
010-067	Comment on restrictions on respective commanding Generals in Koreaparticularly MacArthurRestrictions on bridge bombing, Yalu River. 10th Corps CG, General Almond, and lack of flank coordination between 10th Corps and 8th Army.
068-135	Draws parallel to Pershing and General Peyton March in WW I and Eisenhower/Marshall in WW II. Mr. Pogue's version of General Marshall's memoires. Reiterate lack of flank coordination. Staff visits from Japanfew except over month end
136-193	No personal knowledge of indications the Chinese would enter the war. Felt the Chinese entry was surprise to commanders and staff. Recollection of enormity of the reversal at the hands of the Chinesefailure of US intelligence.
	Comments on General MacArthur's actionsletters to Congress
194-233	Return from Korea to Fort EustisGeneral Heileman's influence. Choice between Fort Mason, California or Command of Hampton Rhodes or the Transportation School.
· 	Only time lived on Army Post in over 20 years of service.
	Very rewarding job.
234-293	Dedication of new school.
• .	General Duffyemphasis on athletic teamspolitically inclinedArrangement between General Besson and self to assign personnel directly to the staff of the school. Football star sworn in under stands. Willie Maysno duty but baseball.
294-329	Outstanding officers assigned to the schoolturned out superior young officers. DUKW and BARC developed at Fort Eustis. Growth of helicopter and helicopter main- tenance training requirement.

Pioneered in use of close circuit TV for education.

Key to success was high caliber instructors. Shortage of manpower to keep up publications and manuals.

One of the best tours of duty--proud of output--very rewarding.

Brigadier General (then Major) Hurow-success story--Polish jewish immigrant in 1938--couldn't speak English-great respect for him and what he has accomplished.

431-538 Need for and importance of ROTC and its influence in providing citizen soldier--same for National Guard.

More on Volunteer Army--no fear accept in cost--feels money alone not enough to attract proper quality of people.

UMT--only fair way and feels it will come in time. Concept of lesser percent to college and the Army training crafts and skills. Project transition.

Back Transportation School--restructuring due to advent of helicopter--spearheaded by General Besson. Influence on logistics system in Vietnam--Delong Pier--Cam-Rhān ra nh Bay.

Back to Washington--October--Assistant to General Paul F. Yount. Essentially same duties as prior to WW II.

Advent of concept of single Manageship and Executive Agents for DOD activities.

Military Traffic Management Agency--one of early implementations of this concept. Given job of conceptualizing, organizing, staffing, and operating--resulted in MTMA (today is MTMTS)

Purely multi-service organization which was considerably smaller than som of parts from which it came (or replaced). Importance of maintaining a viable civilian industry.

770-830 1st Star after 12 1/2 years as colonel. 2nd Star came rapidly thereafter.

831-879 Promotional aspect of the job. Validity of traffic management concept proven over years. Need to retire 2 or 3 generations for concept of joint action to really work well.

46

Personal misfortunes—Chauncey ran away found in Washington, DC. Julian's long illness—constant care. Three boys attending Woodrow Wilson High School—very unusual! House on Springdale Street. Chronic Ulcerative Colitis—operations performed by General Heaton and team who operated on President Eisenhower for illeitus. Julian's death—July 1957.

986-1204

Chauncey to West Point. Speech before Federation for Railway Progress--1957. Wrote it personally and memorized word for word--Hurow as audience of one. Bill Faricy, President AAR, came to talk about before hand.

Encouragement from personnel in industry on Q.T. (e.g. 7th, 8th, 9th morning delivery of LOX from Gary, Indianna to Huntsville, Alabama) Al Perleman arguing after dinner--Les Calhoon comment.

1205-1281

Five job offers in next few weeks, including Vice President of New York Central, Association of American Railroads, President of New Haven Railroad, and President of North American Car.

Interview w/Al Perleman, President of New York Central Refer to Art Baylis.

1282-1400

Handy Associates approach on job w/North American Car. Bill Spencer Interview, Ralph Bud--Consultant to President Roosevelt in WW II one of directors of NAC. General Robert E. Wood, President of Sears, Roebuch, Co.--Interview.

#### Side 2

010~043

Bill Spencer social friend of General Marshall. Relates how General Marshall (then LTC) very disappointed in being sent out to boondocks on N.G. duty. Still attentive to Mrs. Marshall.

044-100

Interview w/Bill Spencer on objectives--firm job offer from NAC. No contract--now feel was a mistake.

101-134

Pioneered in use of computers to replace "rate men"-found computer memory of those days was too small.

135-184	Put in for retirement at 28 1/2 years service. Possibility for Third Star. General McGruderDCSLOG.Retirement ceremony at Fort Eustis.
185-244	Chauncey let out of West Point. Gar Davidson conversation - unsatisfactory public relations! Association with Davidson on Board of Trustees of West Point. Influence of girlfriend on Chauney's dismissal.
245-271	Chauncey to University of Denvermarried nurse from Fitzimmons General Hospital before graduation. Mention of Donald's career progress.
272-296	Coincidence of both boys in computer field. 1420 Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinoispresent residencelonger than any other.
	Fortuitous timing at NAC.
297-360	Ben Coleman of Evans Products. Walter Curleyboth recommended that NAC was best offer.
	Need to learn business finance ins and outs.
·	Description of NAC businesslong term lease of railroad carsmany of special type. NAC did maintenance.
361-400	Company heavy user of long term debtsadvantage of slow obsolescence of railroad cars in business.
401-430	Types of customers of NAC size of fleet doubled from 12-13,000 to 25-26,000 during tenure as President.
431-445	Railroad company view of such companies as NAC, Union Tank Car Line, General American.
446-492	Breakup of Standard Oil and establishment of Union Tank Car LineDefacto monopoly in industry. Judge Landis' decisiongoodbut took long time to full realization.
493-519	Sliding fortunes of the railroad'struck and air competition, pressures of unionism and restrictions of Federal regulation.
520542	Advice to investorsstay away from federally regulated industries.
543-564	Santa Fe and South Pacific. Attitudes toward lessons.

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	565–590	Coal car usagerailroad ownedhighly specialized. Norfolk and Western cars at Norfolk.
·	591-649	Concept of no Chairman of the Board. Two cliques in the company. Military experience stood in good stead in management, particularly of people.
	650-732	No formal personnel evaluation policy. Basic principles in dealing with people. System of annual physicals. Changes in pay policy, vacations, and "promotion from within."
	733-799	Military way ahead in handling its people compared to industry.
•		Importance of personal characterprivate bank accountbag job.
•		Traffic Manager of A.E. StaleyChristmas present.
	800-823	Little things importantsetting the examplehave their impact.
	824-897	Listing on N.Y.S.E. Reincorporating in Delaware.
	898-940	Board of Directors helpful but conservative—warned about way leveraged the debt.  Stockholder w/one share at start had four at end of
	· .	career.
	941-1030	Paricipation in extracurricular activitiesBoy Scouts, civicVice President of City Council for Transportation, Salvation Army, Laymen's National Bible Association.
		Collecting silhouettes, decanters, et al.
	1031-1125	Expense accounts and related practices.
		Misuse of company cars.
	1126-1182	Assistant Ch. of TransportationBob Wiley (Brigadier General during WW II)listened to gripesget it off chest.
	1183-1211	More on growth of NACe.g. Standard and Poor rating of A+
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Lack of a designated successor. Letting three financial Vice Presidents go rather than designate as Executive Vice President.

Problem of designating a successor too early in the game.

#### ORAL HISTORY LOG M.G. Lasher--Tape 5

#### Side 1

#### Counter #

#### Remarks

015-056 Fortunate timing in joining North American Car Corp (NAC). Innovations and new ideas needed in the RR Industry--first to introduce rail cars for transport of automobiles.

057-085 Fiberglass tank cars--first to introduce to industry.

086-104 Bringing in youth--Canadian subsidiary--Lester Pearson on board--company prospered.

105-141 Search for replacement as President of NAC--Richard Boyd--Background--plans for succession.

142-177 Flying Tiger move to take over NAC--call from Wayne Hoffman in Los Angeles--illegal conspiracy not disclosed to SEC.

178-200 CAB Hearing try--unsuccessful--analogy to Penn Central problems. Talking to Senator Hardke of Indiana w/o success.

201-235 Tender offer for NAC Stock--48% equaled essential control--difficult decision but decided to give into takeover--further fight judged as futile w/o the CAB intervention.

236-245 CAB suspension would have saved the day and badly hurt Flying Tiger.

246-294 Retirement contract in addition to std. Pension Plan. Tied to consultant posture.

295-334 Liquidation of Flying Tiger stock--retirement from NAC--Boyd's contract bought off--now AMTRACK manager for central region.

335-357 Decision and actions to move to the Hudson Valley in Cold Spring, New York.

358-370 Trustee of USMA Association of Graduates. Plans for future work and enjoyment.

371-392 Summary of miscellaneous items--no personal car--modes of getting around in past ten years.

#### Counter #

#### Remarks

393-400 Collecting activities.

401-420 Purchase of New Mercedes--first car since 1958.

421-465 Mention of new house in Cold Spring, New York. Mention of Donald's assignment and current situation.

466-485 Mention of Chauncey's situation and family--sense of accomplishment for lifetime.

486-500 Project to update the Lasher geneology.

501-560 Opinions on Lend-Lease and its effect on America and American mobilization capability. Personal decision to stop shipment of planes to East Coast. Felt helping British gave our industry a head start for our own buildup.

Troop movement security measures during World War II. Persistent attempts by enemy agents would have paid off, but finite knowledge of overseas shipments was well guarded.

616-643 Comments on the CCC and other New Deal programs. CCC successful because was done by the Army! Not good in long term effect.

644-700 TVA? Centralization and socialization contrary to our economic system.

701-750 Trust busting and government regulating powers and actions. World War II rescued the country rather than socialization and regulation of the New Deal.

751-790 Comments on regulation of public services (telephone and railroads, e.g.) ICC never recognized real RR problems which developed as result of truck and air competition.

791-800 Pure monopoly (e.g., tele and elec) needs regulation.

801-867 Importance of entrepreneurship in growth and success of the nation as source of our strength and wealth. Example of our problems w/ shortage of natural gas as direct result of government regulation and taxes.

868-888 Environmental regulation -- same basic comments.

889-999 Comment on creation of a Defense Department of a JCS--needed and good in concept but lacking in execution--too centralized and usurped basic job of and expertise of military. Comment on General Marshal's comment or Secretary of War Stimpson. Need to separate political and military decisionmaking. Belief in unification and need for total reorganization.

#### Counter #

#### Remarks

100-1078 Importance of civilians in the military departments.

Deplores discrepancy between civil servant and military salaries.

Example of young civil servant who worked for him in and after World War II.

1079-1155 Difference in rounded experience of military vs relatively narrow civilian experience which so suits the military for decisionmaking on a broader scale.

1156-1176 Different motivation of the military vs civilians in the government.

1177-1277 Comments on specialization vs generalists in the service. Own specialty somewhat limiting.

1278-1344 ADPS should be left to civilians--particularly high technology parts.

1345-1420 Why an Army? Until the millenium will always be true that the greatest deterrent to war is military strength.

#### Side 2

018-074 More on Why an Army" Power of nation stems from its people and institutions—the phenomenon of the EEC and possible model for more economic detente greatest deterrent to war salvation is in instilling the proper character in the youth of the country.

075-175 West Point as a graduate school and ROTC as basic and main source of officers? Not a good idea. Never get the proper moral fiber for the nucleus of the officer corps. Thrust of civilian institution is far different than for West Point—as it should be, but therefore cannot replace West Point and its basic aim. Must retain academies substantially as they are.

176- Will add letters from distinguished associates as received.

HEADQUARTERS
EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY KOREA (EUSAK)
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1
APO 301

12 February 1951

MEMORANDUM TO: Colonel Edmund C. R. Lasher
Transportation Officer
Headquarters EUSAK

- 1. I have been authorized by the Chief of Staff to give you the following confidential information. General Ridgway, with the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, has sent a personal letter direct to General Collins, Army Chief of Staff, strongly urging favorable action on his recent recommendation for your promotion to the rank of Brigadier General. I have read the letter and can sincerely state that is one of the strongest letters concerning such matters that I have ever read.
- 2. I felt that, in deference to General Ridgway, you should have knowledge of this information, and the Chief of Staff has authorized me to give it to you.

/s/Tom CONLEY

#### COPY

# HEADQUARTERS. EIGHTH UNITED STAIRS ARMY KOREA (EUSAK) Office of the Commanding General APO 301

AG 201-Lasher, Edmund C. R. (o) KGP

23 January 1951

SUBJECT:

Fromotion of Colonel Edmund C. R. Lasher

to the Rank of Brigadier General

THRU:

Commander-in-Chief Far East Command

APO 500

TO:

The Adjutant General Department of the Army Washington 25, D. C.

- 1. Recommend that Colonel Edmund C. R. Lasher, 017624, Transportation Corps, Transportation Officer, Headquarters, Eighth United States Army Norea, be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, temporary.
- 2. Colonel Lasher arrived in Korea from the Zone of the Interic on 30 August 1950: There existed at that time a need for a capable, aggressive and determined officer with a thorough technical background in all phases of operations relative to surface and air type transporta Immediately upon arrival in morea, he established air, rail and water transportation control agencies in all vital areas and imbued in his superdinates the importance of their tasks, and the paramount need for efficient and effective supply lines. Colonel Lasher prepared and carried into immediate execution plans for the renabilitation of antique railway facilities and equipment. His resourcefulness, untiring effort and determination made possible the close coordination and maximum use of all available means of transportation, thereby overcoming what appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle.
- 3. Colonel Lasher has demonstrated his ability for advancement to the next higher grade by his superior performance in a position of great responsibility from 30 August 1950 to the present date during a severe and active campaign against a determined enemy.
- 4. This recommendation for promotion is based on reports of thi officer's performance of daty over an extended period and further confirmed by my personal observation of his accomplishments.

Ltr, AG 201-Lasher, Edmund C. R. (o) AGP, Hq EUSAK, Subject, "Promoti of Colonel Edmund C. A. Lasher to the mank of Brigadier General," dt 23 Jan 51, Cont'd

- 5. A position vacancy in the grade of Brigadier General exists within the authorized strength of this command.
- 6. This recommendation concerns not a permanent appointment in the regular establishment but temporary promotion based solely on demostrated superior performance of duty in combat. I know of no better criteria.

M. B. RIDGWAY
Lieutenant General, United States Army
Commanding